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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAN, AFGHANISTAN, EU-IRELAND, OLYMPICS,
HEALTHCARE; Berlin

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- [1](#)1. Lead Stories Summary

Print media led with stories on German assistance for the victims of the natural disasters in Eastern Asia, coalition talks in Berlin and the coalition talks between the CDU and the SPD in the state of Thuringia. Editorials focused on the state of the SPD and on the coalition talks in Thuringia. ZDF-TV's early evening newscast heute and ARD-TV's early evening newscast Tagesschau opened with stories on the disaster areas in Sumatra.

- [1](#)2. (Iran) P5+1 Talks

Die Welt (10/02) editorialized: "The Iranian nuclear program has been known to the world for seven years... During this time, Tehran has broken several agreements and brazenly lied. The world was repeatedly confronted with new facts-and continuously reduced its demands. In the beginning, Tehran was supposed to stop all enrichment activities as a condition for negotiations. Prior to yesterday's consultations in Geneva, it was said that one would be happy if the Iranians were seriously interested in negotiations... One crushed rebellion and several brusquely rejected offers later, Obama is in a position where George W. Bush once was. He must realize that the mullahs only understand the language of tough power politics. It will not work without painful sanctions. Diplomats say let's rather have a trade war than a war. Iran will try to show willingness to talk so that it must not make serious concessions and prevent sanctions at the same. Lets us no longer fall into this trap, which we have seen for seven years. This time around we must see quick results; the process is not the goal. The clock is ticking ever louder."

Under the headline "Highly risky game," Handelsblatt (10/02)

remarked in a front-page editorial: "The world is upside down in Geneva while the Americans treat Iran's negotiators courteously, Europeans are working towards tougher sanctions. Although Iran has secretly built a second facility to enrich uranium, President Obama stays calm and sticks to his policy of an extended hand.... The U.S. government wants to rid Iran of any excuse to talk itself out of trouble. Against this background, he offers a policy at an eye level, hoping that the other side will repay him by making concessions. Obama is playing a highly risky game. He wants to make a breakthrough in the Mideast policy, which has been deadlocked for decades... However, the chances are not very good.... Tehran does not yet show any interest in an agreement.

Iran insists on the right to enrich uranium, deceives [the world] and is getting closer to nuclear bombs.... Ahmadinejad's offer to enrich uranium abroad has the taste of delaying tactics. The Iranian government knows that time is on its side. Other countries in the Persian Gulf region, Russia and Germany have made this proposal in vain before. Obama's soft approach has two advantages. The theocratic regime's argument of the U.S. Satan no longer works and it isolates itself internationally if it rejects the mediation proposal.

Obama, on the other hand, can point out that he has tried everything... Iran would be wrong to interpret Obama's approach as an impression of weakness."

13. (Afghanistan) German Role

Frankfurter Allgemeine (10/02) argued that "among the burdens of the international Afghanistan mission is the renewed conflict among the organizations working in the country. It is well-known that there are frictions between UN mission chief Kai Ede and leading ISAF

officers.

The same is true for the hundreds of NGOs in the country. But now there has apparently also been a clash among top UN officials. In addition to personal antipathies, there is also a factual dissent.

The UN acts in a strictly legalistic way, while the Americans have been criticizing President Karzai for a long time. It is hard to say who is right, but in case of doubt, it is the one who supports the view that it is better to leave it to the Afghans to settle their problems on their own."

Under the headline: "UN Accepts Election Fraud," die tageszeitung (10/02) argued: "With Peter Galbraith, the massive election falsifications have found a prominent victim. Ban Ki-moon fired him.

Galbraith had called for a profound investigation of the manipulations carried out by President Hamid Karzai. But his boss, Norwegian diplomat Kai Eide, only wanted cosmetic checks which would not change Karzai's victory.... We can assume that Ban does not fire such high-ranking U.S. diplomat without prior consultations with Washington

That is why Ban's decision also falls back on Obama, who accepted the resignation. With this move, the United States and the UN have now accepted the electoral fraud in Afghanistan. What is even worse is that, in the future, NATO and ISAF, including the Bundeswehr, will support an illegitimate government in Kabul. This undermines the credibility of the international military mission in Afghanistan but also in the sending states. The result is another nail in the coffin of the democratization of Afghanistan which was promised with such grandiloquent words."

Under the headline: "Speculation Over Soldiers," Sueddeutsche Zeitung (10/02) reported that the government in Berlin dismissed a report according to which it is planning to increase the Bundeswehr forces in Afghanistan to 7,000 soldiers. Deutschlandfunk had reported that, in the framework of the extension of the Bundeswehr mandate for the mission in Afghanistan, the ceiling could be lifted from 4,500 to 7,000 soldiers. The Defense Ministry called these figures "mere speculation for which there is no basis." FDP defense policy spokeswoman Birgit Homburger told Die Welt: "There is currently no need for such an increase. Currently 4,225 soldiers take part in the mission and the ceiling [of 4,500 soldiers] has not been exhausted.

SPD defense policy expert Rainer Arnold demanded coordinated moves of all countries involved. He said that "all countries must do more of everything." He called the figure of 7,000 soldiers "utopian" and

advocated sending more trainers for Afghan soldiers. The paper also refers to a report on ARD-TV according to which the CDU/CSU plans to considerably increase the number of trainers.

Regional daily Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten (10/02) opined:

"Speculation about an increase of Bundeswehr forces to 7,000 soldiers makes clear one thing: Neither Germany nor NATO nor the United States currently has a strategy on how to progress in Afghanistan. While ISAF commander McChrystal wants to increase the forces, U.S. Defense Secretary Gates has doubts about an increase; and President Obama is still waiting for inspiration. That is why there is no reason for Germany to jump to conclusions and this in view of the fact that skepticism among Germans is increasing rather than decreasing. It is foreseeable that the pressure on the CDU/CSU/FDP coalition to send more forces will grow. But it is also clear that Obama wants to reduce the number of forces even during his term."

14. (EU) Irish Vote on Lisbon Treaty

Sddeutsche (10/02) headlined "Worries in Brussels," noting that "even a yes by the Irish does not suffice for EU reform" because the Czech president Klaus may be able to delay ratification until April

hoping that possible new British Prime Minister Cameron might reverse British ratification of the treaty. The paper highlights: "A no would mean that the European unity is at risk." Handelsblatt (10/02) noted in a feature article: "For the second time, the future of the EU lies in the hand of the Irish. A no to the Lisbon Treaty would be a catastrophe - also for the Celtic tiger.

However, also a yes would not be a deal done... More trouble would follow if Czech President Klaus were to succeed in delaying the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty until next spring."

15. (U.S.) Chicago's Olympic Bid

Several papers carried reports on the upcoming vote of the International Olympic Committee on the host of the 2016 Olympics. The papers present the bids of the various cities and wrote that President Obama has traveled to Copenhagen to support Chicago's bid. Under the headline: "You're On!," Tagesspiegel (10/02) opined: "How many balls can an outstanding juggler keep in the air? In the political arena, President Obama hardly misses an opportunity to test his skills. In the United States, many people are now waiting for the first ball to fall. Between the debate on healthcare reform, Afghanistan strategy, and climate change, President Obama flew to Copenhagen to get support for Chicago's bid for the 2016 Olympics.

However, if he returns empty-handed, people will interpret this as his personal defeat. For the time being, the Obamas are relying on their international rock star status. In addition, there is the seductive force of the dollar: in Chicago, the IOC can expect a high profit from TV rights. But this is a fact about which the Obamas and the U.S. media remain silent. Irrespective of whether we have jugglers superstars or presidents --in general they do not want to have other Gods besides them."

Under the headline: "Critics Scoff At Obama's Trip," Spiegel online

(10/02) wrote: "In Copenhagen, President Obama and his wife will deliver a presentation, explain Chicago's bid and conduct confidential talks with IOC officials like during a party congress. In view of such a double tour de force, the goal can only be the gold medal, like the Dream Team of professional U.S. basketball players during the Olympics in Barcelona in 1992, for whom any other result would have been an insult. In addition, Obama will hardly like to fall back behind Tony Blair who, as British PM, in 2005 successfully brought the 2012 Olympics to London. And all this in view of the fact that Obama's team has prepared their mission for the Olympics like a military general staff. For weeks, his staff has been working on influencing representatives from IOC countries, and they also did this at the G-20 summit in Pittsburgh."

Under the headline: "Obama's Courtship," Frankfurter Allgemeine (10/02) reported: "The U.S. President as petitioner with the IOC, this has never happened before. But [presidents] are doing a lot to get the permission to organize the Olympics. This Friday, the most important man in the world will leave behind the Afghanistan mission and healthcare reform for a few hours to appear at the IOC session

in Copenhagen. The potentate in the pose of a petitioner. But this is not all. In order to gain the support of the IOC and the votes for

Chicago, he is accepting something that each state leader, who is particular about his charisma, avoids as much as he can. Obama is now risking to be seen as an unpopular loser in the end. The question of whether his charisma will suffice to mollify the IOC is open. Obama will have to work hard to get the IOC votes."

Die Welt (10/02) carried a lengthy report under the headline: "Obamas Are Smiling For Olympia," and reported: "Involuntarily, the IOC is demonstrating in Copenhagen how things have gotten out of control.

For years, the IOC members have been concerned that the Games do not turn into an over-dimensional event that can no longer be organized. But the awarding of the Olympics to one city is already going off course. Since billions of dollars are moved for infrastructure and organization, applicants used to fly in their state leaders in addition to prominent supporters. Shortly before the showdown, Barack Obama has come for a few hours to Copenhagen. For the duration of his stay, life in the Danish capital is threatening to come to a standstill; even subways could be stopped for a brief period of time. And even before his arrival, Barack 'yes-we-can' Obama is outshining everything. But IOC members see the offensives of charm and the charisma of the most powerful man in the world and his colleagues with skepticism, even though they feel flattered...."

16. (U.S.) Healthcare Reform

Under the headline: "Obama's Sick Reform," die tageszeitung (10/02) editorialized: "Dr. Obama, where is your truth serum? What the Americans need in the debate over healthcare reform is no longer a tranquilizer: Barack Obama can remove fears and the feeling of unease over the project called healthcare reform only by presenting clear facts. He can go to as many town hall meetings and talk shows as possible to try to get support for his project but, at the same time, he must describe the ways on how to bring about a reform of the U.S. healthcare system. If millions of people get something they did not have before, then millions of other people are afraid of losing something. The majority of people who are not covered are African Americans and Hispanics. Many whites are wondering why they should pay for them. The healthcare issue which the President has set in motion again has turned into an issue that includes racist questions. But Obama must also clearly address this."

MURPHY